

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims in the manner shown below. The claims in this listing will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Canceled)

3. (Cancelled).

4. (Currently Amended) A rechargeable battery, comprising:

a prismatic cell case having short lateral walls and long lateral walls;

a group of electrodes accommodated inside the cell case, the group of electrodes including a plurality of positive and negative electrode plates arranged alternately and substantially in parallel to the long lateral walls of the cell case with an intervening separator therebetween; and

a plurality of collector plates, wherein lateral edges of the respective lead portions of the positive electrode plates and the negative electrode plates are attached to the collector plates, whereby the group of electrodes is held by the collector plates;

wherein said lateral edges of the positive electrode plates protrude beyond the negative electrode plates on one side, and said lateral edges of the negative electrode plates protrude beyond the group of positive electrode plates on the opposite side, the protruding portions forming the lead portions;

P19757.A13

wherein upper open ends of the cell cases are closed by an integral lid member;

~~The rechargeable battery of Claim 1, wherein:~~

wherein a plurality of cell cases are coupled together as one piece with the short lateral walls of the cell cases being mutually integrated, thereby constituting an integral battery case;  
and

wherein the collector plates in adjacent cell cases are connected to each other via a connection fitting that extends through the short lateral walls between the adjacent cell cases.

5. (Original) The rechargeable battery of Claim 4, wherein the collector plates are connected at an upper edge thereof to another group of electrodes or to an outer terminal.

6. (Previously Presented) The rechargeable battery of Claim 4, wherein  
through holes are formed in the short lateral walls between two adjacent cell cases;  
and

the connection fitting comprises a pair of frame fittings, each frame fitting having a base end and a protruding portion that is inserted into the through holes, distal ends of the protruding portions being welded together, and the collector plates being attached to the base end of the frame fittings.

7. (Currently Amended) A rechargeable battery, comprising:

a prismatic cell case having short lateral walls and long lateral walls;

P19757.A13

a group of electrodes accommodated inside the cell case, the group of electrodes including a plurality of positive and negative electrode plates arranged alternately and substantially in parallel to the long lateral walls of the cell case with an intervening separator therebetween; and

a plurality of collector plates, wherein lateral edges of the respective lead portions of the positive electrode plates and the negative electrode plates are attached to the collector plates, whereby the group of electrodes is held by the collector plates;

wherein said lateral edges of the positive electrode plates protrude beyond the negative electrode plates on one side, and said lateral edges of the negative electrode plates protrude beyond the group of positive electrode plates on the opposite side, the protruding portions forming the lead portions;

wherein upper open ends of the cell cases are closed by an integral lid member; and

~~The rechargeable battery of Claim 1,~~ wherein  $D < L \leq 4D$ , where L is the length of a side of the positive and negative electrode plates where the lead portions are provided, and D is the length of a side of the positive and negative electrode plates in a direction perpendicular to the length L thereto.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) A rechargeable battery, comprising:

a prismatic cell case having short lateral walls and long lateral walls;

P19757.A13

a group of electrodes accommodated inside the cell case, the group of electrodes including a plurality of positive and negative electrode plates arranged alternately and substantially in parallel to the long lateral walls of the cell case with an intervening separator therebetween; and

a plurality of collector plates, wherein lateral edges of the respective lead portions of the positive electrode plates and the negative electrode plates are attached to the collector plates, whereby the group of electrodes is held by the collector plates;

wherein said lateral edges of the positive electrode plates protrude beyond the negative electrode plates on one side, and said lateral edges of the negative electrode plates protrude beyond the group of positive electrode plates on the opposite side, the protruding portions forming the lead portions;

wherein upper open ends of the cell cases are closed by an integral lid member; and

~~The rechargeable battery of Claim 1,~~ wherein the separator is of a belt-like shape and meanders alternately between the positive electrode plates and the negative electrode plates.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) A rechargeable battery, comprising:

a prismatic cell case having short lateral walls and long lateral walls;

P19757.A13

a group of electrodes accommodated inside the cell case, the group of electrodes including a plurality of positive and negative electrode plates arranged alternately and substantially in parallel to the long lateral walls of the cell case with an intervening separator therebetween; and

a plurality of collector plates, wherein lateral edges of the respective lead portions of the positive electrode plates and the negative electrode plates are attached to the collector plates, whereby the group of electrodes is held by the collector plates;

wherein said lateral edges of the positive electrode plates protrude beyond the negative electrode plates on one side, and said lateral edges of the negative electrode plates protrude beyond the group of positive electrode plates on the opposite side, the protruding portions forming the lead portions;

wherein upper open ends of the cell cases are closed by an integral lid member; and

~~The rechargeable battery of claim 1,~~ wherein each collector plate is substantially C-shaped.

13. (Currently Amended) A rechargeable battery, comprising:

a prismatic cell case having short lateral walls and long lateral walls;

a group of electrodes accommodated inside the cell case, the group of electrodes including a plurality of positive and negative electrode plates arranged alternately and

P19757.A13

substantially in parallel to the long lateral walls of the cell case with an intervening separator therebetween; and

a plurality of collector plates, wherein lateral edges of the respective lead portions of the positive electrode plates and the negative electrode plates are attached to the collector plates, whereby the group of electrodes is held by the collector plates;

wherein said lateral edges of the positive electrode plates protrude beyond the negative electrode plates on one side, and said lateral edges of the negative electrode plates protrude beyond the group of positive electrode plates on the opposite side, the protruding portions forming the lead portions;

wherein upper open ends of the cell cases are closed by an integral lid member; and

~~The rechargeable battery of claim 1,~~ wherein each collector plate has a substantially flat middle portion and opposed edge portions that are substantially orthogonal to the flat lower portion.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Previously Presented) A rechargeable battery, comprising:

a prismatic cell case having short lateral walls and long lateral walls;

a group of electrodes accommodated inside the cell case, the group of electrodes including a plurality of positive and negative electrode plates arranged alternately and

P19757.A13

substantially in parallel to the long lateral walls of the cell case with an intervening separator therebetween; and

a plurality of collector plates, wherein lateral edges of respective lead portions of the positive electrode plates and the negative electrode plates are attached to the collector plates, whereby the group of electrodes is held by the collector plates;

wherein said lateral edges of the positive electrode plates protrude beyond the negative electrode plates on one side, and said lateral edges of the negative electrode plates protrude beyond the group of positive electrode plates on the opposite side, the protruding portions forming the lead portions; and

wherein each collector plate is substantially C-shaped to restrict the group of positive electrode plates and the group of negative electrode plates.